

PowerLines

May 2016

Ready for some fun?

On behalf of our board of directors and all the employees at Eastern Illini Electric Cooperative, I personally invite you to join in the festivities at our 29th annual meeting of members on June 9th.

In addition to providing a status report on your co-op and the chance for you to elect board members in three of our nine districts, our goal is to present a family friendly and entertaining event that you do not want to miss!

The festivities will begin at 3 p.m. at Paxton-Buckley-Loda HS/JH in Paxton. The business portion of the meeting will begin at 7 p.m.

Back by popular demand, you can feast on a fried chicken and roast beef dinner, with all the trimmings, served by Niemerg's Catering.

Again this year, all member/owners that register and attend the annual meeting will receive a \$25 bill credit.

Some of the other exciting activities we have planned for you include:

- Inflatables
- Bucket truck rides
- "Ask a Lineman" booth
- Petting zoo
- Engaging seminars
- Desserts, refreshments, & snacks
- The Gene Trimble Band
- Traveling Toy Train exhibit
- Election of Board members
- Political dignitaries

This event is also a chance for us to visit with member/owners like you, as well as your opportunity to learn about our programs and services. It is also a great opportunity to meet and get to know your cooperative employees. We will also have representatives on hand to discuss issues impacting our communities, including state and national legislative and regulatory issues.



**MESSAGE FROM
THE PRESIDENT**

Perhaps most importantly, it is your opportunity to exercise one of the greatest benefits of cooperative membership - the ability to vote for your representation on our board of directors. Eastern Illini is not owned by far away investors, nor is it run by an appointed board. We are overseen by a democratically elected and local board.

Your directors are member/owners just like you. They all live and work in our communities. They are well aware of the issues that we all deal with on a daily basis.

Next month's issue of *PowerLines* will include more information, schedules, directions, and a summary of our annual report. The official annual report and annual meeting program will be available online at www.eiec.coop prior to the annual meeting. It will also be mailed to you.

Please make it a point to join us on June 9 at your annual meeting. We promise to make it an enjoyable time for the whole family!

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**SmartHub is your online
and app portal to:**

**View and pay your bill
Report an outage
Track your electric use
Update your account info**

**Visit www.eiec.coop to
get started!**

Memorial Day

Our cooperative will be closed on Monday, May 30th, in honor of Memorial Day. As you enjoy the holiday with your family and friends, please take time to remember the brave men and women who gave their lives for this great country. They are, after all, the reason for the holiday.

Your Touchstone Energy[®]
Cooperative 

Eastern Illini's culture of safety

Safety - both for you and our employees - is a core component of everything we do.

There is a children's book titled *Safety 1st, Safety Always*. As you can imagine, it encompasses many of the traditional safety lessons parents should teach their children. We drill youngsters about safety from an early age because we know how important it is to protect ourselves and those we care about. In the spirit of May being National Electrical Safety Month, let's take a look at how electric cooperatives have been stepping up to the plate when it comes to safety at the co-op.

Up until 2007, there was an alarming national trend among electric co-ops, which was the fact that the number of "lost time" accidents was increasing. Lost time is defined as anything resulting in an employee missing time at work. These accidents could range from a sprained ankle to the ultimate tragedy of a fatality.

This is why Federated Rural Electric Insurance Exchange, which insures the vast majority of electric co-ops nationwide, initiated a campaign called a "Culture of Safety." It was designed to create a much greater awareness about safety issues at all electric co-ops.

Through the use of strategy labs across the country, Federated brought together co-op CEOs and general managers, operations supervisors, safety directors and linemen to better understand how each group

viewed safety. In doing so, differences in perceptions regarding safety within cooperatives were identified, allowing for much needed conversations and evaluations of how to raise awareness and improve local safety cultures.

The "Speak Up, Listen Up" program is designed to empower anyone who sees a potentially unsafe situation to Speak Up and encourages everyone to Listen Up to their concerns. The results have been dramatic, with more than a 30 percent decline in the number of accidents over the past nine years.

Of course we also devote a great deal of time and energy in promoting electrical safety to the youth in our communities. Our engaging safety presentations are offered free of charge to all area schools and civic groups.

As a member, you too have a role. If you see any potential dangerous situations or practices, you should report them as soon as possible to Eastern Illini by calling us at 800-824-5102.

The implementation and success of the Culture of Safety program demonstrates a very important point. If we are intentional about our actions, we can indeed change the culture in our organizations. The same is true for our families, our teams and any groups we may belong to.

We also know that living our cooperative principles and values is equally important. We have the best business model because it puts you, the member/owner, at the center of our efforts.

For more information about any of our safety programs, visit www.eiec.org or call us at 800-824-5102.



Safety is a motivator in everything we do. Matt Eisenmenger (center) from the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives recently presented Brad Smith (left), Eastern Illini's Operations & Safety Coordinator, and Bob Hunzinger (right), Eastern Illini's President/CEO with two safety certificates for excellence in promoting safety with Eastern Illini's employees.

HOW THE ELECTRIC CO-OP WORKS



1. Member-owners elect board directors.

2. Board defines expectations for the co-op's general manager (GM/CEO) and provides policies & strategic goals.

3. GM/CEO interprets the board's expectations to create a plan.



8. Board reflects on policies and updates them as needed.



Member-owners provide input & feedback to board, GM & staff.



4. GM/CEO delegates responsibilities to staff who help carry out the plan.



7. GM/CEO shares results with the board.



6. GM/CEO collects data from staff about their efforts.



5. Staff develop and oversee programs to accomplish their tasks.



Everyone wins with good lighting

We love working with our member/owners. Especially the passionate ones. When that passion matches up with an issue we're involved with, it makes sense to work together.

In that light, we're excited to feature a guest columnist this month. Mike Lockwood is the owner of Lockwood Custom Optics. His company specializes in providing high-quality optics for astronomers, telescope builders, scientists, and researchers.

On a dark night in the country, bright lights dot the horizon, marking the location of farms, businesses, and homes. This seems perfectly normal to most people, but in reality it is part of one of the largest wastes of energy in the modern world.

Your co-op is in the business of providing dependable electricity to its member/owners, but they also offer lots of advice regarding energy efficiency because they want their member/owners to make the best use of the power that they buy.

There is a revolution currently going on in the world of lighting. LEDs are now the most efficient source of light, and they are now being widely used in homes and for street lighting. This LED revolution has also brought great improvements in how we can efficiently light outdoor areas.

We're all familiar with a lamp shade. It keeps the direct light out of your eyes when you turn on a lamp indoors. Without it, we're blinded by the glare of the light bulb itself. The shade also serves to direct the light where we want it to go.

When an outdoor space is lit, even with a bright light, you can see well under or near the light, but not very well a modest distance away. If we can direct outdoor lighting better, we can get more of the light where we need it. This allows us to avoid both wasting energy and lighting areas that we don't want to light.

When it is dark, our eyes are more sensitive to light, but that is wiped out when we have a very bright light shining in our eyes. Lights that don't have a "shade" or shield

by, or the police can't see if there is something suspicious going on because they are blinded by glare created by the unshielded light.

The goal with outdoor lighting should be to direct the light to the ground where it will do the most good. We also want to shield the actual bulb from view, and of course we want to do it all as efficiently as possible.

This reduces glare as much as possible, improves visibility tremendously, and saves a lot of



on them to block the blinding brightness of the bulb itself create glare, and actually interfere with us seeing well.

It's the same as having a car's high beam lights shining in your eyes, or when you are driving with the sun in your eyes. It is easy for you to miss things on the road in these situations, and likewise it is easy for people to hide in shadows in this situation because we are literally blinded by the light. If you have a bright, unshielded light on, your neighbors, those driving

energy. That is exactly how the new LED street lights work. LEDs are directional by their nature, meaning the light coming out of them goes mostly in one direction. This is an advantage for nighttime lighting because it is easier to put light where you want it and where it is most useful – on the ground in the area that you need to see in.

To use another analogy, when you set up a lawn sprinkler, you try not to water the street, driveway, and the side of the house. Doing so would be just a waste. Likewise, it

makes no sense for a light to spray light in all directions where it will do no good. It is better to control where the light goes and keep it near the light fixture where it will do the most good.

Eastern Illini is now installing shielded LED fixtures in place of their old mercury vapor and sodium vapor dusk-till-dawn lights. When installed properly with the LED fixture leveled, the light shines downward, you don't see the bulb from a distance, and wasted energy is greatly reduced. You can't see the light from a distance, you can only see the area it is lighting, and this makes for the best possible visibility. This is the future of lighting!

This is why Eastern Illini asked me to write this article. I'm a member/owner, an electrical engineer by education, and I now make my living running a small business that makes telescope mirrors. I enjoy observing the sky at night and watching meteor showers, etc. I also enjoy night time photography of the sky and thunderstorms.

These things that are important to me and my business were made virtually impossible when my neighbor's very bright, unshielded mercury vapor pole light was turned on by the cooperative. The light ruined my night vision when I would walk out onto my deck to view the sky. It even lit up the inside of my house.

I contacted Eastern Illini and talked to them about the problems that I was having. Shortly after our conversation I found out that a new shielded LED fixture would be installed at my neighbor's home. About a week later, the new light was up, and after it was leveled, the light trespass on my property was all but eliminated. Now that's what I call service!

The great thing is that in this case, my neighbor got a more effective light, and I got the sky back. Everyone wins when good lighting is used – the property owner gets better illumination of their property, neighbors get darkness if they want it, it is easier to spot suspicious activity, and lots of energy is saved. Everybody wins!

Most people are simply uncomfortable with darkness, and they FEEL safer when their yard is lit up all night. It is far better in terms of energy savings to use a motion detector light that comes on when movement is detected. Another simpler alternative is to simply use a light that is controlled by a switch, and only turn it on when necessary.

In fact, most electric providers, have stopped calling "dusk-til-dawn" lights "security" lights because there is no proof that they provide better security, and claiming as such puts the electric provider at legal risk. Government studies have shown that outdoor lighting does not reduce or prevent crime, and a few studies from the US and other countries have shown that it can actually increase crime, likely by illuminating potential targets and making it easier for criminals to access them.

So, the moral of the story here is that

high-efficiency, shielded lighting, installed properly, results in better visibility for the homeowner and neighbors, reduced energy use and better efficiency, and darker skies for all to enjoy.

And you thought it was just a light.



This series of images starts with an old high-pressure sodium outdoor light (above). As you can tell, much of the light is shining out and up - not where it is supposed to be. The middle image shows an LED light that is not quite angled directly down to the ground. The bottom image is a correctly positioned LED outdoor light. The light is shining where it supposed to, and there isn't much extraneous light.

Eastern Illini's Annual Meeting

This event is designed exclusively for you - our member/owners!

Attend this year's meeting and EARN a \$25 bill credit!

That's right....a \$25 bill credit just for attending and registering.

Enjoy FOOD, FUN & ENTERTAINMENT!

You and your family will be treated to a fried chicken dinner, tons of treats, and entertainment for all ages.

VOTE for your directors!

Your cooperative is led by a local board of directors elected by YOU.

Three spots on the board are up for election each year.

We'll keep the kiddos ENTERTAINED, too!

Activities will include a bounce house and other inflatables, a model train exhibit, face painting, miniature golf, and surprise guests!

ENGAGING seminars!

Our energy experts will offer tips on how to save money on your bills.

You'll also have the chance to learn more about other exciting topics.

Please join us at your ANNUAL MEETING
June 9, 2016 | Registration begins at 3PM
Paxton-Buckley-Loda High School
Paxton, IL